

To the Members of the Human Services Committee of Connecticut General Assembly:

I am Rose Reyes. I live and work in Willimantic in the county of Windham. I teach in the public school system as a Bilingual Educator. I am the WFP member of Town Council; a VP of Windham Federation of Teachers local 1577 and CT AFT LPAC. I am an ally of C4D. Because of those affiliations I strongly support:

**SB284: AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE FROM EIGHT TO EIGHTEEN YEARS FOR AN INCOME-ELIGIBLE PERSON TO OBTAIN MEDICAL ASSISTANCE REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS.**

This bill is an important step in making sure our immigrant community has access to the healthcare we can provide. This particular age group in this particular time is vital since it impacts their educational access as well. We were wise to pass HUSKY for the younger children (0-8 yrs) but we must continue because their educational success is determined by many factors, including access to adequate healthcare. Windham has a typical profile of a community with under/non insured because of documentation. We are a vulnerable community and I wish to call attention to this need.

I have taught close to twenty years and in each year I have had undocumented children suffering either in class or at home because they did not have access to health services. A cough turned into bronchitis which then meant more than three weeks out of school. Vision screenings in school did not assure us that glasses could be purchased. A cold turned into COVID-19 which in turn could and did transmit throughout the family. This brings me to point out that we should plan for coverage for the entire family. It would be the best investment for school success and the community.

I urge the committee to support legislation. I also urge the committee to work towards opening access to all immigrants regardless of age. Connecticut needs all of us.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Rose Reyes

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